

St. Joseph's RC Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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"I came so that
you may have life,
and have it to
the full."

– John 10:10



Faith

Respect

Confidence

Resilience

Empathy

St. Joseph's RC Primary School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been produced following DfE guidance, The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The Equality Act 2010, Part 3 Children and Families Act 2013.

Bullying: it is important to recognise what, in law, is defined as bullying:

'Deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.' (DfES)

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

At St. Joseph's School, we do not tolerate any form of bullying. It is up to all of us to stop bullying by making it unacceptable for anybody to be a bully without being found out. Bullying can take a wide range of forms, but if you do anything to another person which is meant to hurt them or embarrass them, either by yourself or as part of a group, this may be considered to be bullying. Some of the different types of bullying recognised by the school include:

- Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, abusive comments, tormenting such as hiding belongings)
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence, unwanted physical contact.)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)
- Cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, chat rooms mobile phones, email etc)
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)
- Possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings)

Bullying can be motivated by many different factors; these include racial, homophobic, cultural and religious differences.

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

- Explain to the bully that his or her words/actions are upsetting; he or she may not be aware of this. With a friend if you can, say firmly, "Do you know that's a really hurtful thing to say/do?" "If you haven't anything good to say - say nothing." However if the bullying continues, try not to show your feelings. Speak to an adult.

- Speak up for yourself, with the support of a friend if you can: Younger children are advised to say, "We don't do that in our school! Just play fair!" Or you can strongly and loudly say, "That's wrong. We don't do that in our school." Or, "You're wrecking the game - stop messing about and play properly!" Speak to an adult.
- With your friend or by yourself, walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside. Teachers, helpers, and your dinner ladies will always be watching out for you, especially at break times. We will see how you are behaving, and will also notice who is causing the upset. Speak to an adult.
- There are lots of activities at break times, so choose your favourite and try to keep with a friend or friends.
- The bully will not stop if she thinks he or she can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell any member of staff. Talk to your family.
- Remember, we are all unique children of God. If you are different in any way, be proud of it-it's good to be an individual.

You can help to stop bullying:

- If the girl or boy being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If not, stay with them; just being there can help to ease the situation.
- Show that you and your friends disapprove. Speak up for what is right: for example say, loudly, "That's wrong. We don't do that in this school!" or, "You're wrecking the game - stop messing about and play properly!" Older children can help the younger children to control the situation by saying, "We don't do that in our school. Play fair!"
- Give sympathy and support to any other child who may be bullied. Help them to find an adult to speak to.

Things to remember:

- Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think someone might not find your comments funny - don't say them. Think about other people's feelings before you speak.
- If you know of serious bullying tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

Parental Involvement:

Whenever a case of bullying is uncovered, the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully will be informed by personal contact.

If your child is being bullied:

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. They should not dismiss it. Parents should contact school if they are worried. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your child that he or she has done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful

to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the school.

- *Who was involved?
- * Where did it take place?
- * How often has this happened?
- * Why did it take place?
- * What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the school of these details you will want to ask what you can do to support the school in the action taken to support your child. You will also want to make a note of the suggested strategy the school intends to take. Stay in touch with school, so that we can be kept informed of how things are improving and to establish further contact if necessary.

If your child is involved in the bullying, it is important to work with school to modify the patterns of behaviour, which are causing your child to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time. Children sometimes bully others because:

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is
- They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group
- They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends
- They are going through a difficult time personally and need help
- They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships

To stop your child from bullying others:

- Talk with your child and help him or her to understand that what they are doing is unacceptable as it makes other children unhappy
- Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour in order to get what they want
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying
- Liaise with the school: Talk to your child's teacher, or to the Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Harris or the Headteacher, Mrs Hince who will always do their best to see you straight away if at all possible.
- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school
- Check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom he/she can go to if they have a problem or a worry of any kind.

The School will need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective.

If you have a complaint about how any issue has been dealt with, please use the complaints procedure as set out on our website, contact school in the first instance.

Signs of bullying:

Although the definition of bullying in common law includes a repetitive element, staff are vigilant about seemingly isolated incidents which can form a pattern or the development of an asymmetrical power relationship.

A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:

- Becomes frightened of coming to school, or frightened to attend specific lessons or go into specific areas of the school
- Changes to their usual routine
- Becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously
- Begins stammering
- Threatens to run away or runs away
- Threatens suicide
- Begins to perform poorly at school
- Frequently has missing or damaged possessions
- Is always asking for extra money or never has money
- Has unexplained injuries
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Begins to bully others
- Stops eating or attending meals
- Is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- Becomes nervous when a cyber message is received
- Is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above

School Policy on Prevention of Bullying

Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. We focus on developing strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This involves talking to pupils about issues of difference, in lessons, Religious education, through dedicated events and projects, within assemblies and by inviting external agencies and visitors.

An ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave is crucial. This culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including trips and visits. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who are encouraged and expected to set a good example to the younger children. Rewards for good behaviour are given to individuals, groups and classes, information is shared with parents.

Our Behaviour Policy has been developed in consultation with pupils and parents. It is reviewed regularly and shared with all stakeholders.

Our school aims to prevent any form of bullying from becoming established. When the children's views are sought, they report that they feel safe and there is no bullying. Children are given strategies to help them develop self confidence and become assertive yet polite individuals and team members. Staff are vigilant and have successfully established a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school community to report any instances of bullying.

- Teachers and other members of staff are always there to listen to children and to watch carefully for signs of loneliness or unhappiness.
- The School Council provides an opportunity for children to raise general issues of concern.
- The curriculum, especially Religious Education, is used as a vital means of supporting families in teaching children right from wrong, how to manage these feelings and specific issues are taken up by Teachers and our Teaching Assistants. In some circumstances external support is sought.
- Children are encouraged to become strong individuals, developing a secure sense of self belief by nurturing their talents. We aim to raise self esteem by raising actual attainment in all areas of learning to the highest extent possible for each child.

Bullying may be identified in several ways:

- Disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied
- Disclosure to another pupil by the individual being bullied
- Witnesses to specific bullying events
- Suspicion of bullying based upon the indicators listed above.

In all cases an allegation of bullying will be treated seriously, open mindedly, fairly and investigated thoroughly. Isolated incidents between pupils may be considered on a case by case basis, but may not require the more prolonged investigation which is often associated with bullying.

Investigating a suspected case of bullying

All members of staff have a duty to respond straight away if they suspect, or are made aware of, a case of bullying. The teacher involved can carry out an initial investigation, recording this on CPOMS. If a pattern is noticeable or developing, the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher will step in. Vigilance will be stepped up - it is then even more important than normal. An investigation of bullying will take time: there are no instant solutions. However, the member of staff investigating will take the following steps:

- Victim(s), Aggressor(s) and Witness(es) will be interviewed by the member of staff investigating. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters within the limits of our confidentiality policy. The victim(s) in particular should be reassured that the matter will be dealt with and is being treated seriously.

- If the victim reports the matter, they should be spoken to first. If not, any witnesses should be interviewed, followed by the accused pupil and finally the victim.
- All pupils involved in the situation should be given a fair hearing and be permitted to tell their version of events without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described.
- A written summary of the information gathered should be made, and agreed by the individuals involved. This is important as it will enable the victim and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing.
- Remember that it can be hard to establish the facts
- A problem solving approach, which avoids blame can be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change.

Action by the school

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the victim should be told that action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing. The bully needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the victim, and should be given support in order to modify their behaviour, including, if appropriate, counselling. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

If, in spite of support, the bullying behaviour continues, there are a number of possible sanctions available to the school. These will include:

- A verbal warning, recorded on CPOMS (following the first incidence, CPOMS will be used to record all incidents)
- Punishment, which aims to deprive the bully of opportunities to carry on with their behaviour. These may include: missing break and lunchtime play, playing on a different playground, missing half-termly treats.
- A letter of apology to the victim, with a copy to be kept on file
- The Headteacher will take action in the case of persistent or severe bullying, which may include referral to outside agencies, the instigation of a CAF, support from CAMHS, fixed term or permanent exclusion.(in which case, parents have the right to appeal the decision.)

Informing Parents

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully will be informed by personal contact, followed by written confirmation.

Follow Up

The victim will be asked periodically whether the situation has been resolved and has remained resolved (usually after a week, with further follow up weekly). The perpetrator will also be asked about their behaviour and supported to maintain improvements. If any reprisals are reported, the Head teacher must be informed immediately for further action to be taken.

Cyber Bullying

It is recognised that in the case of cyber bullying, the victim and aggressor may not both be on the school premises at the time when the incidents occur. However, the school recognises its responsibility to address the problem where possible and will take action to prevent incidents of this nature.

Where there is a question of a law having been broken, consultation of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 will be made, on a case by case basis. It includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyber-bullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items. Mobile phones are not allowed in our school. If any are brought into school (perhaps for use by the pupil with parents' consent in an out of school activity, such as a walking home alone, etc.) the phone must be handed in to the school office on entry to school, where it will be securely stored.

It is also recognised that bystanders can easily become perpetrators by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example or by taking part in online polls or discussions. Pupils, parents and staff should also refer to the School's e-safety policy for further information.

Bullying on the Basis of Race, Colour, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Age Alleged bullying which focuses on the areas of equality and diversity will be addressed in the same way as other forms of bullying. However it will be seen in the context of St. Joseph's commitment to promoting an environment where all members of its community are valued and celebrated equally for their differences, as unique and loved children of God.

Bullying of Staff

Bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. Advice provided by the DfE for headteachers and all school staff on how to protect themselves from cyber bullying and how to tackle it if it happens, is available for all staff.